

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are pending in this application.

By this Amendment, the specification is amended for form, as the Examiner suggested. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Office Action indicates, in the "Office Action Summary" section, that a copy of the March 11, 2005 Information Disclosure Statement is attached to the Office Action. However, no such attachment is in the Office Action. The Examiner is respectfully requested to return an initialed copy of the Form 1449 of the March 11, 2005 Information Disclosure Statement.

The Office Action objects to the specification. The specification is amended, as outlined above. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the specification is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP 04-280088 to Inoue in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,389,585 to Konig; and rejects claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Inoue and Konig and further in view of WO 02/070433 to Morimoto. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 recites "a logarithmic standard deviation of a particle size distribution of not less than 0.15 and not more than 0.40." Independent claim 5 recites similar features. The applied references do not disclose or render obvious the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 5.

The Office Action recognizes that Inoue does not disclose the above-quoted features, but asserts that Konig cures the deficiencies of Inoue. However, one of ordinary skill would not have tried to combine Inoue and Konig.

Inoue discloses a SiC powder that has the average particle size of 5.5 μm . On the other hand, Konig describes that a particle size is adjusted between 1 and 3000 nm (3 μm) (Konig, col. 5, lines 1-4). Thus, Konig can not manufacture the SiC powder that has the average particle size of 5.5 μm .

The Office Action asserts that the subject matter recited in the claims would have been obvious alleging that Konig (col. 1, lines 15-18) discloses "a high degree of powder purity and an absence of coarse-grained portions or agglomerates have a favorable effect on the characteristics of corresponding components." However, a zero logarithmic standard deviation of a particle size distribution would have been the best condition if an absence of coarse-grained portions has a favorable effect. On the other hand, the logarithmic standard deviation of a particle size distribution is more than 0.15 in the present application.

As pointed out in the present application (page 8, lines 20-23), a kneaded raw material has low fluidity when a logarithmic standard deviation of a particle size distribution is smaller than 0.15. Thus, it causes many defects in shape such as small holes generated in the honeycomb ribs and lacks of the honeycomb ribs when creating an extrude body. For example, smaller particles enter gaps between large particles when a logarithmic standard deviation of a particle size distribution is larger than 0.40. Then, the pores of the honeycomb ribs are filled and the porosity of the sintered body is reduced (see the specification at page 9, lines 3-6).

Thus, it is critical that silicon carbide particles have a logarithmic standard deviation of a particle size distribution between 0.15 and 0.40. It can not achieve the subject matter recited in the claims if a honeycomb structure is manufactured using a particle size not in the recited range.

Inoue and Konig do not recognize that a logarithmic standard deviation of a particle size distribution has an effect on fluidity of a kneaded raw material. Inoue and Konig do not

recognize the criticality of the feature that silicon carbide particles have a logarithmic standard deviation of a particle size distribution between 0.15 and 0.40. In particular, Konig's "favorable effect" is irrelevant to this criticality. Thus, one of ordinary skill would not have tried to combine Inoue and Konig to achieve the subject matter recited in the claims.

Also, Morimoto does not supply the subject matter lacking in Inoue and Konig. Thus, the applied references, either individually or in combination, do not disclose or render obvious the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 5, and claims 2-4 depending therefrom. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-5 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: February 26, 2009

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